

between India, the world's largest democracy, and the United States, the world's oldest democracy, has demonstrated our shared values for Rule of Law.

I grew up with an appreciation of the people of India, because my father, First Lieutenant Hugh Wilson, served there in the U.S. Army Air Corps Flying Tigers in 1944, where he recognized the industriousness of the citizens of India.

I am particularly grateful for the prosperous Indian-American community in South Carolina and look forward to its continued growth and achievements. In 2014 in New York at Madison Square Garden, I helped welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in 2016 in Washington, I was on the Escort Committee for the Prime Minister's address to Congress, in 2019 in New Delhi at the Red Fort, I attended Indian Independence Day, and in 2019 at the Howdy Modi program in Houston at the Astrodome, I joined President Donald Trump to recognize the Prime Minister.

South Carolina's first female governor in 340 years was appropriately Nikki Randhawa Haley, who served with distinction. The Indian American community, of all immigrant groups in the United States, has achieved the highest per capita income level.

I appreciate the visits with India's Consul General Dr. Swati V. Kulkarni of Atlanta and Mr. KV Kumar, President and CEO of the Indian American International Chamber of Commerce to discuss the bilateral relationship between India and the United States. Bilateral trade in goods between the two countries crossed the \$100 billion mark in 2021, making it the largest volume of goods trade in a calendar year in India-U.S. economic history. This also represents an almost 45 percent jump from 2020, which is the single biggest jump of all the U.S. trade partners. Working together, Indian industry can build dynamic military manufacturing to be independent of foreign suppliers.

The talks with Consul General also covered conversation on mass murder by war criminal Putin in Ukraine, its implications, and current regional developments.

To take U.S. and India ties forward and to realize the full spirit of our strategic partnership, USA and the Republic of India need to cooperate more closely in the Indo-Pacific. Certainly, there are issues of mutual concern with regard to China's malign goals in the region, and the partnership to counter these authoritarian aspirations should be robust.

Throughout her service as India's Consul General, Dr. Kulkarni has been an exemplary representative of the Republic of India. She was proactive across the southeast promoting the shared values of India and America. She will be greatly missed upon her departure from her post, as she continues her productive service for the people of India.

In the current contest of democracy with Rule of Law opposed by authoritarians with Rule of Gun, it is more important for cooperation to establish peace through strength.

STANDING WITH THE PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with the people of Bangladesh. I want to voice my support for human rights defenders, members of minority groups, and civil society in Bangladesh at this moment when the Bangladeshi government is persisting in threatening the basic human rights and civil liberties of its people. The Bangladeshi government, led by Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League, has earned widespread criticism for its deteriorating human rights record, and for its failure to protect the most vulnerable people living in Bangladesh—indigenous people, women, religious minorities, activists, and refugees.

Amnesty International tracks human rights abuses in Bangladesh and has noted their acceleration during the pandemic. Under the draconian Digital Security Act of 2018, Bangladeshi journalists and other human rights defenders are routinely persecuted for reporting on corruption or criticizing any of the government's policies. COVID-19 policies against public gatherings have been used to prevent political meetings, and to quell public protests against the government. Violence against women and indigenous activists has also intensified during the pandemic.

The Bangladeshi government employs a joint task force composed of members of police, military, and border guards called the Rapid Action Battalion, and it has consistently failed to address the excesses of these and other security forces. The Rapid Action Battalion and other Bangladeshi law enforcement entities are alleged to be responsible for more than 600 disappearances since 2009 and nearly 600 extrajudicial killings since 2018. These incidents reportedly target opposition party members, journalists, and human rights activists.

Last August, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, of which I am a member, hosted a briefing on the deeply disturbing uptick in enforced disappearances in Bangladesh. Representatives from Human Rights Watch and the Asian Human Rights Commission participated, as did Bangladeshi photojournalist and activist Shahidul Alam who had been unlawfully arrested after posting criticism of the Bangladeshi Government on Facebook, and the sister of disappeared opposition leader Sajedul Islam Sumon. These violent and illegal forced disappearances have chilling effects on free speech, political opposition, and civil society.

On International Human Rights Day last year, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced sanctions on the Rapid Action Battalion, citing how their actions undermine the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations reported that since the sanctions against the Rapid Action Battalion officials were announced in December, the Bangladeshi government has responded by launching a retaliatory campaign of intimidation and harassment. The homes of at least 10 relatives of people forcibly disappeared are reported to have been raided at night, and some relatives were

forced to sign statements saying that their loved ones had not in fact been forcibly disappeared.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in standing with the people of Bangladesh, especially those bravest and most vulnerable, and urging the Bangladeshi government to take immediate action to respect the civil rights and safety of all the people of Bangladesh.

IN RECOGNITION OF ROBERT HUNGERSCHAFFER

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Robert A. Hungerschafer from Bellingham, Washington.

Robert is a dedicated volunteer who has served his community with selflessness and compassion by donating blood, plasma and platelets.

His contributions are staggering.

Robert has made 1,100 voluntary donations, potentially saving more than 7,900 lives.

He has donated more than 300 gallons of blood, plasma and platelets and traveled over 74,000 miles to help save lives.

But Robert is more than a donor.

He also volunteers by documenting the lives of Washington state servicemembers who lost their lives in World War I.

Robert's donations help save the lives of people he will never meet. This selflessness is essential to building stronger communities and is a reminder that everyone can play a part in improving the lives of their neighbors.

It is my honor to recognize Robert A. Hungerschafer for his service to his community, Washington state and the United States.

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA LEVENSON—CALIFORNIA'S 24TH CONGRESSIONAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. SALUD O. CARBAJAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

Mr. CARBAJAL. Madam Speaker, each year, through the Women of the Year Award, my office extends special recognition to women on the Central Coast who have made a difference in our community. I would like to recognize one outstanding Women of the Year Award recipient, Barbara Levenson, of Pismo Beach, California.

After 27 years as a pharmacist at Atascadero State Hospital, Barbara Levenson retired to focus on community service. But even before retirement, Barbara was recognized by the Tribune as an Unsung Hero for her dedication to serving humane causes. This is illustrated by her work with the Wellness Kitchen in Atascadero, where food was prepared for residents with special dietary needs due to health conditions. She was also a member of the Flying Samaritans, a team of medical professionals that flies to different areas of the world to provide free medical services to the needy.